

## **Tridharma Religion in Indonesia: Reading Hikmah Tridharma and Tjahaja Tri-Dharma Magazines during the 1970s-1980s**

**Deni Miharja<sup>1\*</sup>, Setia Gumilar<sup>2</sup>, Asep Sandi Ruswanda<sup>3</sup>, Moh Zaimil Alivin<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia; e-mail: denimiharja@uinsgd.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia; e-mail: setiagumilar@uinsgd.ac.id

<sup>3</sup> UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia; e-mail: asruswanda@uinsgd.ac.id

<sup>3</sup> The University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom; e-mail: moh.alivin@ed.ac.uk

\* Correspondence

Received: 2022-03-15; Accepted: 2022-07-06; Published: 2022-08-26

**Abstract:** In religious conversations, syncretism is often perceived negatively even though it is actually a healthy process. One form of syncretism that emerged in Indonesia is the religion of Tridharma which consists of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. This paper discusses syncretism in the religion of Tridharma in Indonesia. Using a historical approach during the 1970s, this paper is a literature study of two magazines affiliated with the religion of Tridharma, namely the Hikmah Tridharma magazine and the Tjahaja Tri-Dharma magazine. This paper rethinks the concept of syncretism as a dirty word, or at least negative form, to one of neutrality. Considering religion as dynamic, syncretism in the religion of Tridharma or Sam Kauw has been a historical process since the Ming dynasty in Mainland China. The Hikmah Tridharma magazine and the Tjahaja Tri-Dharma magazine during the 1970s illustrate how syncretism in the body of Tridharma religion occurs not only between Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism but also with Hinduism and group of theosophy. As one element of the dynamics of religious belief, the politics of recognition is important. In Indonesia, the state gave a different attitude to Chinese religions or all things Chinese-affiliated in general during the New Order era, and the era of transition to reform, Gus Dur. This then triggered contestation between Chinese religions themselves in Indonesia, especially between the religion of Tridharma and Confucianism.

**Keywords:** Buddhism; Chinese religions; Confucianism; Daoism; syncretism; Tridharma.

**Abstrak:** Di dalam diskusi agama, sinkretisme sering dipersepsikan secara negatif meskipun sebenarnya itu merupakan proses yang sehat. Salah satu bentuk sinkretisme yang muncul di Indonesia adalah agama Tridharma yang terdiri dari agama Budha, Konghucu, dan Tao. Tulisan ini membahas sinkretisme dalam agama Tridharma di Indonesia. Menggunakan pendekatan historis kurun waktu 1970-an sampai dengan 1980-an, tulisan ini adalah studi literatur dari dua majalah yang berafiliasi dengan agama Tridharma, yaitu majalah Hikmah Tridharma dan majalah Tjahaja Tri-Dharma. Tulisan ini mengkaji ulang konsep sinkretisme sebagai istilah yang negatif, menjadi netral. Melihat agama sebagai bentuk yang dinamis, sinkretisme dalam agama Tridharma atau Sam Kauw adalah perjalanan historis sejak dinasti Ming di Tiongkok Daratan. Majalah Hikmah Tridharma dan majalah Tjahaja Tri-Dharma antara tahun 1970-an dan 1980-an menggambarkan bagaimana sinkretisme dalam tubuh agama Tridharma terjadi tidak hanya antara agama Budha, Konghucu, dan Tao, tapi juga dengan agama Hindu dan kelompok teosofi. Sebagai salah satu elemen dinamika keagamaan, politik pengakuan itu penting. Di Indonesia, negara memberikan pandangan yang berbeda terhadap agama-agama Tiongkok dan secara umum semua hal terkait ketionghoan selama era Orde Baru, Soeharto, dan era transisi reformasi, Gus Dur. Ini yang kemudian memicu persaingan di antara agama-agama Tiongkok sendiri di Indonesia, terutama antara agama Tridharma dan agama Konghucu.

**Kata Kunci:** agama Buddha; agama Konghucu; Agama Tao; agama Tridharma; Agama-agama Tiongkok; sinkretisme.

## 1. Introduction

The tidal wave of the Chinese peranakans in Indonesia is very dynamic, especially religion. In a sense, those who still embrace Chinese religions not only get the turbulence of political recognition from the state but also the complex dynamics involving religion among themselves.

In Indonesia, Chinese religions have developed since pre-independence. They are called Sam Kauw which refers to Chinese religions consisting of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, or they are also known as San Jiao. In Indonesia, they are more familiarly called Tridharma. In 1934, Kwee Tek Hoay tried to unite the three religions. Previously, in 1933 he founded Sam Kauw Goat Po or Three religious Societies (Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism) (Steenbrink, 2013, p. 7). A year later, he founded the Sam Kauw organization or Sam Kauw Hwee. After the world war was over, it turned into the Gabungan Sam Kauw Hwee (federation of Sam Kauw organizations). Then, when Suharto came to power, he made a total assimilation policy to integrate Chinese Indonesians with what was claimed to be an indigenous society (Suryadinata, 2014, p. 22). Because the Gabungan Sam Kauw Hwee did not sound "Indonesia", it was then Indonesianized as the Gabungan Tridharma (Tridharma organizations). Here, Suryadinata agreed with political scientists and political sociologists that the state plays an important role in dealing with society and the community (Suryadinata, 2014, p. 19). Moreover, when the issuance of Law no. 1 of 1965, it made a special dynamic for Chinese religions in Indonesia because the Law recognized Buddhism and Confucianism (in 1966 Confucianism had been de-recognized before in 2000 the state re-recognized Confucianism as an official religion) and did not mention the religion of Tridharma which involves Daoism in it.

However, to this day, even though the state does not recognize the religion of Tridharma, the existence of the religion of Tridharma in Indonesia remains a living entity. In Hurd's terminology, she classifies religion into three heuristics, namely: expert religion, lived religion, and governed religion. She stated that: "expert religion is religion as construed by those who generate "policy relevant" knowledge about religion in various contexts. Lived religion is religion as practiced by everyday individuals and groups as they interact with a variety of religious authorities, rituals, texts, and institutions and seek to navigate and make sense of their lives, connections with others, and place in the world. Governed or official religion is religion as construed by those in positions of political and religious power" (Hurd, 2015, p. 8). So, the problem is not whether the religion of Tridharma gets recognition from the state or not only but also to what extent the religion of Tridharma contributes to producing knowledge for experts and becoming part of the daily life of individuals and groups.

Furthermore, the merging of the three religions of Tridharma (consisting of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism) is often considered a form of syncretism, although historically it has happened a long time. According to [tridharma.or.id](http://tridharma.or.id), Lin Chao En (1517-1598) was the leader and founder of the religion of Tridharma, pioneering religion with the combined elements of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, Lin Chao En was one of the most well-known pioneers of the religious syncretism and philosophy of Tridharma in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) of China (Franke, 1973). He took the essence of the three teachings and combined them so that they could be well received by the local community (Hidayat, 2012; Long, 2019; Widjaja et al., 2019). So, the religion of Tridharma cannot be considered a new phenomenon.

Based on the historical context that occurred during the New Order, then there was syncretism between Chinese religions in an umbrella called Tridharma. So, this paper will focus on the religion of Tridharma during the New Order, especially during the 1970s. This paper will analyze the syncretism of the religion of the Dharma through two magazines affiliated with the religion of Tridharma namely Hikmah Tridharma and Tjahaja Tri-Dharma during the 1970s. This paper will look at the evidence of Tridharma religious syncretism in those magazines.

## 2. Research Method

This paper will conduct a content analysis of two magazines namely Hikmah Tridharma and Tjahaja Tri-Dharma magazines. This paper only focuses on the period of publication during the 1970s.

This paper chooses the 1970s period because in this period there was a ban on all things that were Chinese-affiliated after the issuance of Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967.

### 3. Rethinking Syncretism

A standard definition of syncretism suggests an “attempted union or reconciliation of diverse or opposite tenets or practices, especially in philosophy or religion” (Taylor, 1982, p. 193). The basic questions of syncretism are “who is in and who is out? What is in and what is out? Who gets to decide” Furthermore, these questions lead to a debate about self-identity and boundaries (Harrison, 2014a, 2014b). However, many religious people see syncretism as a threat. Some cases show that they object to it. First, fundamentalism in the Christian body. According to Kraemer, world religions consist of two groups namely “naturalistic religions”, a group of religions that do not originate from God’s revelation; and “religions of revelation” are vice versa. Religions of revelation are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. He then argued that all people would not be syncretistic if they became followers of the religions of revelation, especially Christianity. In fact, fundamentalism itself stems from mixing Protestantism with romanticism and empiricism. So, fundamentalism is a type of complex syncretism that rejects the possibility of syncretism. Second, Wahhabism in Islam rejects all other influences by calling it shirk or violations of absolute monotheism. Then, this understanding creates strict limits to maintain the “purity” of tawhid or the theology of absolute monotheism. Here, Wahhabism decided to reject syncretism rather than celebrate it. Third, it is Sikhism. Sikhs felt that their identity was threatened when Harjot Oberoi stated that Sikhism was a mixture of Hinduism, Islam, and others. In short, Sikhism is a product of syncretism. Sikhs viewed Oberoi as insulting, heretical, and anti-Sikh (Harrison, 2014a, pp. 20–29). These three examples are evidence of how syncretism is perceived as a bad thing.

In religious conversations, syncretism is often associated as mixed religion (Sigalow, 2016; Stewart, 1999). It tends to be considered a dirty word or at least negative. However, syncretism is not a matter of whether the word is neutral or bad, but syncretism itself is basically a healthy and natural process. It grows with the understanding and number of religious people themselves. Today, syncretism tends to be unavoidable due to the many thoughts, historical backgrounds, and other processes that might bring together religions. Furthermore, according to Harrison, syncretism can benefit and improve religions. He then divides the categories of syncretism. The first is symmetrical, “[i]t is a kind of balanced syncretism in which two or more religions become effectively one and the prior identities are more-or-less neatly carried over into the new arrangement.” An example is Buddhism’s encounters with Daoism and Confucianism when it came to China. Second, it is asymmetrical syncretism. “Asymmetrical syncretism is the much more common type in which Religion A grafts into itself elements from another religious viewpoint—call it Religion B; Religion A retains its general identity and is the controlling partner but is, nonetheless, changed by its incorporation of elements from Religion B.” The encounters between Islam and Greek thought when Islamic warriors from Arabia conquered the ancient Byzantine region were examples of syncretism in this category. Last, it is reflexive syncretism. “Reflexive syncretism is a subset of asymmetrical syncretism, in which the elements are taken from Religion B. are a reminder of lost or buried aspects of Religion A.” An example is when Christianity came to Western Europe and joined the Celtic religion (Harrison, 2014a, p. 96). Nevertheless, Harrison also states that syncretism can be a bad thing. He called it destructive syncretism. He argues that syncretism does not always produce beneficial developments because some people hold tightly to the principle of preservation of insight. There is no mutuality of wisdom that occurs in syncretism. An example of this category is Jewish haredim or also called ultra-Orthodoxy (Harrison, 2014a, p. 132).

According to Pye (1994, p. 222), the basic theoretical point of view for understanding syncretism, the first is understanding the use of the term syncretism. Syncretism is often used simply to mean the integration of different religions. However, the relationship is actually more complex and does not have to be stable or permanent. Closely related traditions may have changed over time and may have different meanings. Second, the syncretistic pattern has three main characteristics, namely, first, it is

coherent; second, it is ambiguous; third, it is temporary. Last, the completion of the syncretistic pattern follows one of the following three patterns. First, it may lead to the assimilation of weaker elements by the dominant tradition. Second, it can be solved by dissolution. Third, it might produce a new religion (synthesis) (Pye, 1994, p. 222). Here, syncretism is not as bad as it is assumed in religious discussions. Furthermore, it is a healthy process and can provide benefits even though it does not always have a positive impact. Therefore, it is important to rethink syncretism amid religious debates.

#### 4. Reading Hikmah Tridharma and Tjahaja Tri-Dharma Magazines during the 1970s

##### *Hikmah Tridharma*

Hikmah Tridharma is a monthly magazine affiliated with Tridharma which is located in Jakarta precisely Silaparamita Tridharma Temple, St. D.I Panjaitan, by pass Cawang, East Jakarta, Province of the Special Capital Region of Jakarta. This magazine is limited to internal readers of Tridharma, published by Balai Kitab Tridharma Indonesia (BAKTI). The person in charge of this magazine is Sasanaputera Satyadharma who is also Ketua Majelis Rohaniawan Tridharma Indonesia (the Chairperson of the Tridharma Indonesian Monk Council). Furthermore, this paper will only discuss the Hikmah Tridharma magazine published in October No. 1 of 1977 (24 pages), November No. 2 of 1977 (24 pages), and December No. 3 of 1977 (28 pages) (Sidarta, 1977a, 1977b, 1977c). The organizational structure of the Hikmah Tridharma magazine is as follows:

Caregiver: Monk Y.A. Subalaratano  
 Person in Charge: Sasanaputera Satyadharma  
 Chief Editor: Gunawan Sidarta  
 Deputy Chief Editor: Dharma Dipa  
 Editorial Staff: Deki Jukanda, Gunananda, and Lilanando

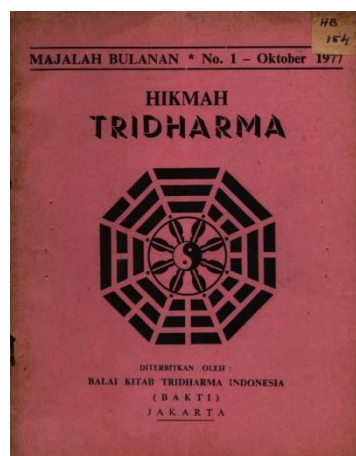


Figure 1 Hikmah Tridharma magazine No. 1, October, 1977

The interesting things contained in these magazines are first, each edition of the first page after the cover contains the Tridharma prayer to the almighty God.

*AUM...*

*Pujilah Tuhan Yang Maha Esa; Tri Nabi Guru Yang agung.*

*Dengan Khidmat dan Sujut; Kami bermohon ke hadapan guru.*

*Bimbinglah kami kejalan tengah yang mulia*

*Tunjukkan kami Cahaya Kesunyatan Dharma.*

*Bangkitkan kesadaran Tao dalam diri kami*

*Berkat Bimbingan serta Pancaran Kasih Guru*

*Hiduplah semua dalam Cinta Kasih.*

*AUM ...*

*Praise God Almighty; Three great Prophets of the Master.*

*With Solemnity and Prostration; We beg before the teacher.*

*Guide us to noble paths*

*Show us the Light of Dharma Truth.*

*Awaken the awareness of the Tao within us*

*Blessings of Guidance and Light of Master's Love*

*Live all in Love.*

*Tenang, Tentram dan Bahagia. Sadhu.*

*Quiet, Peaceful and Happy. Sadhu.*

What is interesting is that in this prayer there is the word AUM which is more identical to Hinduism although it also develops in other Indian religions such as Buddhism and Jainism. In addition, in this prayer also contains praise to three masters or prophets. Second, edition no. 1 and no. 2 wrote the holy words of Tri Nabi (Three Prophets) namely Buddha, Confucius, and Lao Tzu. For example, on page 12 of edition No. November 2, 1977 the Hikmah Tridharma magazine, it said that:

*"Sabda-sabda Suci Tri Nabi Agung*

1. *Aku tidak menyesal bahwa orang lain tidak kenal padaku, aku akan menyesal bilaaku tidak kenal padaorang lain (Lungi I. 16)*
2. *Malam yang paling gelap adalah ketidaktahuan/kebodohan (Avijja).(Dhammapada 243)*
3. *Jika seseorang di waktu pagi telah mengerti kebenaran (Tao). Sore hari meninggal ikhlas (tanpa menyesal) (Lungi IV. 8)*
4. *Siapa yang mengatur sesuatu akan menjadi seorang tukang merusak. Siapa yang memegang sesuatu akan kehilangan. Seorang budiman tidak bekerja untuk mengatur, maka ia tidak akan merusak sesuatu. Ia tidak suka memegang sesuatu maka ia tidak akan kehilangan. (Tao Tek Keng LXIV: 10. 13)"*

*"The Holy Words of the Three Holy Prophet*

1. *I do not regret that other people do not know me, I will regret if I do not know someone else (Lungi I. 16)*
2. *The darkest night is ignorance / stupidity (Avijja) (Dhammapada 243)*
3. *If someone in the morning has understood the truth (Tao), the evening dies sincerely (without regret) (Lungi IV. 8)*
4. *Who arranges something will become a destructive craftsman. Whoever holds something will lose. A wise person does not work to regulate, so he will not damage anything. He does not like to hold something, so he will not lose. (Tao Tek Keng LXIV: 10.13)"*

Last, these magazines must contain Tridharma teachings on Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism such as welcoming Confucius' birthday, Buddha teachings (damma), and explaining the meaning of Tao-Te Ching.

*Tjahaja Tri-Dharma*

Tjahaja Tri-Dharma Magazine is a magazine originating from Surabaya, precisely the No. Cokroaminoto Street 23. This magazine is under the control of the General Leader E.I. Listya Dharma and Chief Editor / Person in Charge Kwee Boen Hian. This paper will focus on the Tjahaja Tri-Dharma Magazine No.1 edition July 15, 1970, edition No. 3, and edition No. 4, first year. Three editions of this magazine are printed by different printers; edition No. 1 printed by Widjaja Timur and edition No. 3 and No. 4 printed by Meliwis. Each edition of this magazine contains 34 pages (Hian, 1970a, 1970b, 1970c).

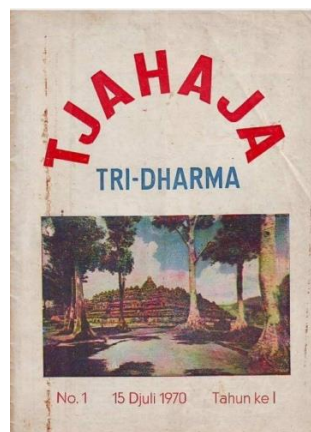


Figure 2 Tjahaja Tri-Dharma magazine No. 1, July 15, 1970

The important points in this magazine are that first this magazine wrote the teachings of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Lao Tzu in each edition. Second, this magazine also discusses Theosophy which emphasizes esoterism of religion. Articles on theosophy can be read on pages 7 and 14 of edition No.1 and pages 19 and 34 of edition No. 4, which discusses the Theosophy of Zen Buddhism written by Stephan A. Hoeller. Also, this magazine writes about minority sects in Buddhism namely Zen Buddhism and Nichiren Shoshu Sokagakkai Buddhism. Then, this magazine also apparently wrote about the teachings of Hinduism. It might have happened because at that time the government banned all Chinese-affiliated matters through Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967, then the religion of Tridharma formally merged itself with Buddhism which was under the Director-General of Hindu-Buddhist Society Guidance which at that time the government had just formed the Director-General of Hindu-Buddhist Society Guidance through Presidential Decree No. RI. 170 in 1966. The Director-General of Society Guidance lasted until 2006 before the government finally split the Director-General of Hindu Society Guidance and Director General of Buddhist Society Guidance through Presidential Regulation No. 63 of 2005 and its implementation through Minister of Religion Regulation No. 3 of 2006 concerning the division of the Director-General of Hindu-Buddhist Society Guidance to become Director-General of Hindu Society Guidance and Director General of Buddhist Society Guidance (Bimas Agama Hindu Sultra, 2014). The writings on Hinduism are on page 30 edition No. 1 on Outlines of Hinduism and remarks I. B.P. Mastra, the Director-General of the Hindu-Buddhist Society Guidance, on the Kuningan and Galungan festivals found on pages 15 and 31 of edition No.4. Last, on page 28 of issue No. 1, which writes about the Articles of Association of the Tridharma Indonesia Place of Worship Chapter 2 on the Principles and Purpose of Article 4 states that this Association is based on Pancasila and Tridharma (Buddism, Confucianism, and Daoism). So, this statute legally recognized the group that Tridharma consists of three teachings.

Based on the explanation above, the religion of Tridharma is a loose integrated system which is a product of mixing various Chinese religions. Furthermore, Chinese religion is a system. It is a system that has its own symbolic system and is implemented by the religious behavior of its worshipers. In addition, the syncretic nature of the religion of Tridharma is seen in its material and social manifestations. An example is a Chinese temple that reflects the traditions of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. Thus, the religion of Tridharma must be systematically analyzed as a whole rather than an unrelated part (Tan, 1983, p. 243). The religion of Tridharma is basically one essence as the bright sun will emerge and illuminate the whole world. In two lines of poetry by Ming T'ai-tsu, he wrote, "Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism are of one essence. The whole world shall see that the sun is bright" (Langlois & K'O-K'Uan, 1983, pp. 138-139).

Furthermore, some scholars who radically claim that Chinese religions are a form of syncretism see that there are changes or shifts that occur in them, these changes generally also occur in other syncretic religions. It is then necessary to conceptualize the relationship between syncretism and the two processes of change that are captured by the transfiguration of forms brought about by mediation in new or accelerated cultural-economic flows and the hybridization of meaning caused by contact between different cultural systems such as modernity. The influence of the influx of modernity in a strong culture into the syncretic culture itself occurs through the material process of many things, such as scientific education, urbanization, industrialization, and the formation of nation-state citizenship. Many of these processes were initiated by Western Christian missionaries, elite educated metropolitan politicians, and global mass media technology (Goh, 2009, pp. 108-110).

According to Sutrisno, there are three aspects of rituals in Chinese religions in Indonesia, especially the contestation between the religion of Tridharma and Confucianism which has been legally recognized by the state. First, it is the invention. She sees a paradigm shift in the Chinese peranakans community in Indonesia, especially followers of Confucianism, about their religious beliefs and thoughts. The second is the authority in which the process of ritualization involves power relations through certain groups. She cites the role of the Confucian Association and the Supreme Council for Confucian Religion in Indonesian (the Indonesian Supreme Council for Confucian Religion or MATAKIN) in disciplining and maintaining their rituals as an example. Third, it is

contestation and struggle or legitimacy. She saw a competition to win legitimacy in defining Chinese rituals and traditions between the religion of Tridharma and Confucianism. She then mentions how the role of the state was involved in justifying the competition. Here, she states that religious competition is closer to liberal market competition (Sutrisno, 2018).

Moreover, talking about contestation between Confucianism and the religion of Tridharma caused by the impact of the policy the government, there are two important laws both in the new order era and in the transition to the reform era, namely Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967 which banned all Chinese-affiliated matters and Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000 who revoked Presidential Decree No. 14 of 1967. On the one hand, the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000 has an impact on the restoration of the rights of the Chinese Peranakan citizens as a result of Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967. On the other hand, the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000 also had an impact on the emergence of contestation and friction among the Chinese Peranakans who were members of the previous Tridharma Religion. Conflict cases that often occur are the struggle for houses of worship between Confucians and the Tridharma religion. For example, the religion of Tridharma religious conflict with Confucianism in Pemangkat District, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan after the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000 by president Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) (Sutrisno, 2018, pp. 99–100). It shows that there is a decrease in solidity among the Chinese Peranakans who were previously members of the Tridharma religion. Furthermore, this can also be interpreted as the condition of Confucians who already feel they have their own identity--separated from the Tridharma religion as a consequence of Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000.

So, through reading Hikmah of Tridharma and Tjahaja Tri-Dharma Magazines during the 1970s, it proves that there has been a lot of syncretism within the body of the religion of Tridharma. Syncretism occurs due to the historical process of Chinese religions themselves. The encounters with other cultures helped shape the religion of Tridharma. Religion as a dynamic form is indeed possible to assimilate, dissolve, or even form a new religion. Thus, it is important to conceptualize syncretism with transfiguration and hybridization. Furthermore, state policies towards Chinese religions in Indonesia turned out to have a significant impact on their existence in Indonesia. The Chinese Peranakans, Tridharma religion, and especially Confucianism have experienced ups and downs of recognition by the state with a series of policies--from Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967 which prohibits anything affiliated with the Chinese and Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000 which revoked Presidential Decree No. 14 of 1967 (Hidayat, 2004).

## 5. Conclusion

The religion of Tridharma or Sam Kauw is the teachings of Chinese religions that have existed since the Ming dynasty in China. It then came to Indonesia with the arrival of immigrants from China to the Indonesian archipelago. In its doctrine and ritual, the religion of Tridharma is a syncretism of the teachings of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

Syncretism itself is basically a healthy process. However, it is often perceived negatively in religious conversations. Positive categories of syncretism can be symmetrical, asymmetrical, and reflexive of syncretism, but syncretism also does not always have a positive meaning, destructive syncretism is a negative form of syncretism. Furthermore, syncretism can also produce several patterns, namely assimilation, dissolution, and even a new religion. Thus, syncretism does not have a truly negative understanding as prescribed by, for instance, Christian theology, Islamic theology, and Sikhism.

Furthermore, syncretism in the religion of Tridharma can be traced through historical processes. Hikmah Tridharma and Tjahaja Tri-Dharma Magazines during the 1970s can describe how the syncretism in the body of the religion of Tridharma took place. Besides, the political dynamics of state recognition of those who were different during the New Order era, Suharto, and the era of transition to reform, Gus Dur, led to contestation between Chinese religions themselves in Indonesia, especially between the religion of Tridharma and Confucianism.



In conclusion, syncretism of the religion of Tridharma is a long historical process dating back centuries. Also, it shows that religion is a dynamic form. It is important to conceptualize the relationship between syncretism and the process of transfiguration and hybridization. Finally, like poetry written by Ming T'ai-tsu, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism are one essence that will enlighten the world.

## References

- Bimas Agama Hindu Sultra. (2014). *Sejarah dan Kepemimpinan Ditjen Bimas Hindu 1946-2021*. Radar Bimas Hindu Sultra. <http://bimashindusultra.blogspot.com/2014/01/sejarah-dan-kepemimpinan-ditjen-bimas.html>
- Franke, W. (1973). Some Remarks on Lin Chao-en (1517–1598). *Oriens Extremus*, 2(2), 161–173.
- Goh, D. (2009). Chinese Religion and the Challenge of Modernity in Malaysia and Singapore: Syncretism, Hybridisation and Transfiguration. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 37(1), 107–137. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853109X385411>
- Harrison, W. H. (2014a). *In praise of mixed religion: The syncretism solution in a multifaith world*. McGill-Queens Univ. Press.
- Harrison, W. H. (2014b). In praise of mixed religion: the syncretism solution in a multifaith world. *Choice Reviews Online*, 52(03), 52-1363-52–1363. <https://doi.org/10.5860/CHOICE.169506>
- Hian, K. B. (Ed.). (1970a). *Madjalah Tjahaja Tri-Dharma Edisi 1*. Widjaja Timur.
- Hian, K. B. (Ed.). (1970b). *Madjalah Tjahaja Tri-Dharma Edisi 2*. Widjaja Timur.
- Hian, K. B. (Ed.). (1970c). *Madjalah Tjahaja Tri-Dharma Edisi 4*. Widjaja Timur.
- Hidayat, S. (2004). *Marginalisasi sistem keyakinan di Indonesia: Kasus Hegemoni Negara terhadap Matakain*. Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- Hidayat, S. (2012). Syncretization of Chinese Religion in Singkawang West Kalimantan. *Al-Albab*, 1(1), 33–48. <https://doi.org/10.24260/alalbab.v1i1.10>
- Hurd, E. S. (2015). *Beyond religious freedom: The new global politics of religion*. Princeton University Press.
- Langlois, J. D., & K'O-K'Uan, S. (1983). Three Teachings Syncretism and The Thought of Ming T'ai-tsu. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 43(1), 97. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2719019>
- Long, N. J. (2019). 'Straightening What's Crooked'? Recognition as Moral Disruption in Indonesia's Confucianist Revival. *Anthropological Forum*, 29(4), 335–355. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2019.1664984>
- Pye, M. (1994). Syncretism versus synthesis1. *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 6(1–4), 217–229. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006894X00118>
- Sidarta, G. (Ed.). (1977a). *Hikmah Tridharma Edisi 1*. Balai Kitab Tridharma Indonesia (BAKTI).
- Sidarta, G. (Ed.). (1977b). *Hikmah Tridharma Edisi 2*. Balai Kitab Tridharma Indonesia (BAKTI).
- Sidarta, G. (Ed.). (1977c). *Hikmah Tridharma Edisi 3*. Balai Kitab Tridharma Indonesia (BAKTI).
- Sigalow, E. (2016). Towards a sociological framework of religious syncretism in the United States. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 84(4), 1029–1055. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfw033>
- Steenbrink, K. (2013). Buddhism in Muslim Indonesia. *Studia Islamika*, 20(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v20i1.346>
- Stewart, C. (1999). Syncretism and its synonyms: Reflections on cultural mixture. *Diacritics*, 29(3), 40–62.
- Suryadinata, L. (2014). State and "Chinese Religions" in Indonesia: Confucianism, Tridharma and Buddhism During the Suharto Rule and After. In *After Migration and Religious Affiliation* (pp. 19–42). World Scientific Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1142/9789814590006\\_0002](https://doi.org/10.1142/9789814590006_0002)
- Sutrisno, E. L. (2018). *Negotiating the Confucian Religion in Indonesia: Invention, Resilience and Revival (1900 – 2010)*. University of Washington Press.
- Tan, C.-B. (1983). Chinese Religion in Malaysia: A General View. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 42(2), 217. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1178483>
- Taylor, R. L. (1982). Proposition and Praxis: The Dilemma of Neo-Confucian Syncretism. *Philosophy East and West*, 32(2), 167–199. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1398716>
- Widjaja, T., Sabana, S., & Adriati, I. (2019). Aesthetical and Philosophical Values of Mu Yi (Wooden Fish) in Vihara Buddhi Bandung. *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Arts, Language and Culture (ICALC 2018)*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icalc-18.2019.17>



© 2022 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY SA) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>).